

White Deer Lake Camp, Chimney Cabin
Cyrus H. McCormick Experimental Forest
Champion vicinity
Marquette County
Michigan

HABS No. MI-30-C

HABS
MICH.
S2-CHAM.V,
1C-

PHOTOGRAPHS AND PHOTOCOPIES
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

WHITE DEER LAKE CAMP,
CHIMNEY CABIN

HABS No. MI-30-C

Physical History

Photographs from about 1907 show the cabin almost complete. Undated plans that agree with the photos show the second floor was originally left open as a porch. By 1930 the porch had been closed in and made into bedrooms. In 1930 changes in hot water plumbing are outlined. Plans of 1932 show additional porches and variations in the bathroom layout.

Plans for 1934 show major modifications. The main bathroom floors were raised to the level of the bedrooms and closets changed. Window and door locations in outside walls were altered, new porches built, bathrooms added to first floor bedrooms, new stairwells built, and new floors installed in lower bedrooms.

In 1940-41 plans and photographs show further major changes in the building. The boiler room and central heat were added. New porches were built to allow for the boiler room. On the interior, the rooms appeared to have been repaneled, some new windows and door were added, floors and framing of the second floor bedrooms were redone, and the bathrooms and closets were extensively remodeled. Cabinets and closets were also added. Photos of work being done also show major modification to porches and the roof.

Description

The 36 by 36 foot Chimney Cabin is the most prominent and impressive building on the island. It is of log construction with both horizontal and palisade log walls. It has two stories and contains four bedrooms, each with an adjoining bath, a stair lobby with a large fireplace, and small adjoining storage rooms. The hip roof of the cabin is crowned with a large native stone chimney which serves the lobby fireplace as well as small wood-burning stoves in the bedrooms. A 4 foot wide balcony on the lake side of each of the two floors provides a view of the lake as well as second exists from each room.

The lobby of the Chimney Cabin contains a well proportioned fireplace with log mantel. The stairs on each side of the fireplace lead to the second floor bedrooms, one third flight above the lobby, and the adjacent stairways to the first floor bedrooms two thirds flight below the lobby. The log-beamed ceiling, smoothly finished log stair components, and the sidewall coverings resulted in an attractive entry. Portions of the lobby walls are finished with handsplit cedar shakes. Hand-hewn window and door casings were also used.

A small room under the second floor balcony at the northeast corner of the cabin contains a steam boiler with its own brick chimney; and also provides access to the insulated crawl space. The attic, fully floored and with ceiling lining, can be reached from a pull down stair adjacent to the lobby.

The four bedrooms were finished with complete wood interiors. Maple flooring, wood panel ceiling, and pine paneled sidewalls were used. Cabinet work consists of well-ventilated clothes closets, shoe storage cabinets, and built-in drawers. While steam heat was provided, a small wood-burning stove was also a part of each room. Vented asbestos-board protected the wall and ceiling near each stove.

Chimney Cabin foundations consist of masonry walls and piers laid directly on the solid rock of the sloping site. Scribed, crossed log piers support the balcony components. Other horizontal log beams and interior log joists support the plank floor, the story-height posts, and the railing.

The log components of the hip roof are newer than the lower sections of the log walls. The wide overhang provides good protection for the second floor balcony decking and railing; perhaps much more than the original roof. Clear vertical grain Douglas fir flooring has been used for roof sheathing. Some sections of the roof are provided with wood gutters.

The railing around the second floor balcony is well done and shows good log working technique. The railing posts are fastened to the log beams below by a long bolt which is accessible at the notch for the lower horizontal rail. The plank flooring was scribed around each post, then sealed with caulking.

The Chimney Cabin contains many novel details of log construction such as the supporting members for the balcony, the small roof extension at the second floor railing, and the railing itself. Other unique features include wood pole lattice work spelling "WDL" (for White Deer Lake) under one of the windows on the west side of the building, and the use of a trunk and limb of a small tree, combined with a wood latch, on the main entrance door.

For overview history, see White Deer Lake Camp, MI-30.

Prepared by:

John Franzen (Archaeologist)
David Schmidt (Forester)
Terry Read (Forester)
Ottawa National Forest
Forest Service, U.S. Department of
Agriculture
February 28, 1984